

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 00975 101557Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1968

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DEPARTMENT FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY JOHNSON

AID FOR AA/AFR MRS. BUTCHER

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID BC

SUBJECT: PROGRAM GRANT FOR BOTSWANA

REF: A) GABORONE 314 B) GABORONE 939 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY: THIS IS TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EARLY FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED PROGRAM GRANT, TEXT OF WHICH WAS HAND-CARRIED TO WASHINGTON TWO WEEKS AGO. ENHANCED IMPORTANCE STEMS FROM A NUMBER OF CONSIDERATIONS, INCLUDING THE UNCERTAIN POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE REGION, THE GOB'S DEPENDENCE ON SOUTH AFRICAN SUPPLIES AND RHODESIAN RAILWAY, THE REFUGEE INFLUX AND INCREASED TENSIONS FROM RECENT BORDER INCIDENTS. LATTER HAVE, BY REVEALING INEXPERIENCE AND INADEQUACY OF BOTSWANA DEFENSE FORCE (BDF), STIMULATED NEED AND DETERMINATION TO STRENGTHEN IT. CONTINUITY OF GOB DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND PROGRAMS, WHICH IT IS OUR POLICY TO SUPPORT, WILL BE GREATLY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 GABORO 00975 101557Z

FACILITATED BY PROGRAM GRANT. WOULD APPRECIATE REPORT ON STATUS AND WHEN IT MAY BE AVAILABLE. END SUMMARY.

2. POLITICAL CLIMATE. THE SITUATION IS REFLECTED IN THE DAILY HEADLINES AND TRAFFICE CONCERNING ZIMBABWE, NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF. RE ZIMBABWE, A DIRECT

BY-PRODUCT OF UNCERTAINTY IS THE CURRENT INFLUX OF REFUGEES, NOW ANTICIPATED BY UNHCR AND RED CROSS REPS TO REACH 20,000 WITHIN THE NEXT SIX TO NINE MONTHS. THIS PROSPECT HAS URGENT SECURITY ASPECTS. DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF ZIMBABWE COME AT A TIME OF UNFORTUNATE BORDER INCIDENTS, E.G., THE RHODESIAN AMBUSH FEBRUARY 27 OF BDF (17 DEAD), THE ENFORCED MARCH OF 432 SCHOOL CHILDREN MARCH 30 TO FRANCISTOWN, THE SHOOTING SAME DAY OF THREE WHITE SUSPECTS IN BORDER AREA WHO RESISTED ARREST. ONE CONCLUSION GOB HAS DRAWN FROM THESE AND OTHER EVENTS IS THAT GUERRILLAS ENJOY UNPRECEDENTED FREEDOM OF ACTION ALONG THE RHODESIA BORDER--AND THAT BDF IS TOO SMALL AND INEXPERIENCED TO CONTROL AND PATROL BOTSWANA TERRITORY. ITS REACTION TO EVENTS HAS BEEN TO REASSESS ITS POLICIES AND STEP UP ITS DEFENSE PREPARATIONS.

3. ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES. IN FINANCING THESE NEW DEFENSE AND REFUGEE COSTS, THE GOB IS OBLIGED TO REDUCE ITS DEVELOPMENT BUDGET AND RELATED OPTIONS OR TO SEEK OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE. THUS FAR, IT HAS LIMITED ITS SEARCH (AS FAR AS WE KNOW) TO FRIENDLY AFRICAN STATES AND INDIA. (BDF COMMANDER, MAJOR GENERAL MERAFHE, RETURNED APRIL 7 FROM SHORT TRIP TO INDIA.) WE BELIEVE THAT PROSPECT OF US PROGRAM GRANT, AND POSSIBILITY OF FREEING ITS OWN RESOURCES FOR DEFENSE/

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 GABORO 00975 101557Z

SECURITY NEEDS, HAS STRENGTHENED GOB RESOLVE TO MAKE DO WITH SHORT-TERM ASSISTANCE FROM AFRICAN AND INDIAN FRIENDS. FOREIGN DONOR ASSISTANCE TO GOB DEVELOPMENT BUDGET IN THE FORM OF FLEXIBLE INPUTS (THAT CAN BE SUBSTITUTED FOR DOMESTIC RESOURCES) IS ONE WAY OF MAINTAINING THE PLANNED LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT, WITHOUT WHICH THE RISKS OF INSTABILITY AND RADICALIZATION WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY ENHANCED. DONOR ASSISTANCE IS NECESSARY FOR SUPPORT OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE BE CURTAILED.

4. WE BELIEVE GOB RELIANCE ON PROSPECTIVE PROGRAM GRANT HELPS TO PROVIDE THE MARGIN OF RESOURCES THAT PERMITS THE CONTINUATION OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY AND THEREBY ENCOURAGES CONTINUED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US AND DEFENSE OF SHARED POLICY OBJECTIVES, INCLUDING PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO AREA'S PROBLEMS. GOB HAS INDICATED CONFIDENCE IN US. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO EXAGGERATE THE IMPORTANCE OF SHOWING THAT THIS CONFIDENCE IS NOT MISPLACED. BECAUSE OF ITS ESSENTIAL IMPORTANCE IN GOB DEVELOPMENT (AND SECURITY) PLANNING, WE WOULD APPRECIATE A STATUS REPORT ON THE STATE OF PROGRAM PROPOSAL. NOTE: WE URGE THAT THE AMOUNT

APPROVED WILL BE \$10 MILLION (RATHER THAN \$9 MILLION
AS INDICATED STATE 83953).
ALBERTI

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